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Organizational Structure
and Functions
of the Division of Information Programs
Federal Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Framework Cued to Three Primary Needs

The organizational framework of the Extension Service Division of Information Programs has been patterned to accent the following three public-service contributions in relation to the over-all objectives of the USDA-Land-Grant College Cooperative Extension System:

First, a contribution to the educational programs of State (including county) extension services, such contributions to be channeled. . .

- (1) Direct to the States, and
- (2) Indirectly to the States through services provided to Federal Extension administrative and program leaders of other divisions.

Second, a contribution to the national agricultural program, as it is reflected in the educational operations of the Cooperative Extension Service, and

Third, a contribution to the various "exclusively Extension" programs, such as; 4-H club work, home demonstration work, farm and home development, and others on which the Cooperative Extension Service has complete operational responsibility.

These three general contributions which the Division can make to the success of the Cooperative Extension Service program and to Agriculture are firmly grounded on Extension's primary aims to encourage more prosperous, happier, and better informed farm people, as producers, families, and citizens, and to build more progressive rural communities. But they also serve other Extension aims.

Premise for Work

The planning, organizing, and effectuating of activities designed to advance these three contributions to the success of extension work are based on the premise that mass communications and teaching aids bolster county extension work in three ways:

- (1) By strengthening face-to-face teaching with supporting factual information released through the local and Statewide press, radio, and other mass channels;
- (2) By widening the influence of agricultural knowledge to many people not ordinarily reached by face-to-face contacts;
- (3) By reenforcing, interpreting, and clarifying direct oral teaching efforts through the informative use of such teaching aids as visual materials and publications, designed to release research facts in palatable ways to encourage the learning process.

Functions

In order for State and county extension workers to accomplish more effective educational work in agriculture and home economics through the use of mass media and with the help of such teaching aids as visual and printed materials, the leadership, guidance, knowledge, services, coordination, liaison relations, and materials from the Federal Extension Service's Division of Information Programs are vital supporting assets.

To provide that backing and backdrop, it is essential to carry on the following functions:

- (1) Training Federal, State and county Extension workers in the successful use of all mass communication channels, in the preparation and use of all types of visual and printed teaching aids, and in related areas.
- (2) Seeking, selecting, sifting, and synthesizing, major USDA program, policy, and research knowledge, and then pointing it up in terms of Extension mass communication and staff-briefing use by the State extension services.
- (3) Developing programs with the States which will permit the States to participate in planning USDA information and visual work, including the production of movies, exhibits, art work, film strips, publications, news, radio, television, and other methods and materials which will better reflect State extension educational requirements and permit adaptation of national subject matter to state research and problems.*

*The Office of Information and the Federal Extension Service will plan jointly the content and form of needed informational materials to better reflect the needs of the Cooperative Extension Service in serving farm people through county extension agents, and to integrate better the various USDA and Land-Grant college informational materials to avoid conflicts in local farm practice recommendations. Such joint planning shall be based upon close collaboration between the Federal Extension Service and representatives of State extension services. - Memo from Ass't Secy. Coke to Adm. Ferguson, 9-22-54

- (4) Evaluating State extension information programs and formulating recommendations for improvement; giving consulting guidance to State extension editors on all information problems including policy guides for standards, management, methods, information philosophy, staff recruitment, etc.; exchanging among all States the most effective methods in the fields of mass communications and production of teaching aids.
- (5) Acting as liaison with USDA agencies and with other executive Departments of the Government on matters and materials vital to Extension information work in the States.**
- (6) Providing helpful services to the Federal Extension Administrator in keeping State extension directors informed of background USDA information and program developments; in writing the annual report; in preparing talks; in publishing a professional Extension magazine devoted to the practical application of extension teaching methods; in delineating the information aspects of broad administrative policy; in the planned and organized distribution to the States of USDA publications; in reporting to USDA agencies and to allied organizations Extension accomplishments in the field on activities in which they are concerned; and the like.
- (7) Providing services to other Federal Extension divisions which facilitate the incorporation of knowledge about their programs in the mass media operations of the USDA and State extension services, and which will provide them with visual aids and other materials and help to facilitate their programs.
- (8) Preparing information interpreting Extension objectives and activities for release through national public communication channels (press, radio, etc.), organizations, and industry.
- (9) Providing other supplemental services, such as; editing manuscripts; clearance of Federal Extension speeches, articles, and public statements involving Extension and USDA policy; consulting help to all Federal Extension staff members on various phases of communications, public relations, visual aids, and the like.

**The Federal Extension Service will be the official liaison with State extension services on USDA information matters and the sole channel of dissemination of the USDA materials required for educational use by Extension Services in States and counties. Use of other channels of disseminating the same materials, when necessary or appropriate, should be arranged jointly by the Federal Extension Service and the Office of Information. - Memo from Ass't Secy. Coke to Adm. Ferguson, 9-22-54

Relations

Such specific functions require the establishment of close liaison with the USDA Office of Information, with other USDA agencies, with other Government departments administering programs of interest and help to rural people, with non-Government organizations, groups, industry, and mass communication media serving rural areas, with other operating divisions of the Federal Extension Service, and with the land-grant colleges.

Type of Staff Required

Successful handling of the functions requires a staff (1) that is professionally trained in the art of agricultural communication, including psychological approaches to the learning process and skills in creative interpretation of background knowledge in terms of its practical application to Extension educational processes; (2) that is equipped with abilities to train extension workers in the techniques of mass communication and in the production of teaching aids; (3) that is well-grounded by education and training in agriculture, home economics, and rural life interests; (4) that has an understanding of Extension philosophy and educational practices; and (5) that possesses attitudes of leadership, cooperation, and service which encourage initiative and developmental responses on the part of others.

Such a staff must be arranged in an organizational structure which will facilitate the procurement and appropriate release to the States of background knowledge; which will provide training competencies in communication skills; which will weld all available information into compact units of Extension program support; which will promote a two-way Federal-State flow of information; which will encourage a State-to-State exchange of techniques; and which will provide adequate Federal leadership, coordination, evaluation, and other services to the States in terms of State needs.

Flexibility of Organization

In breaking down such an organizational structure into subsidiary units, it is recognized that the professional staff members of such units must have somewhat comparable qualifications of skills, farm background, education, and experience. For that reason, no unit should properly be considered as rigidly compartmentalized. Rather the entire organizational structure should be sufficiently flexible to permit interchange of staff members, ideas, and proficiencies as the ebb and flow of USDA-State activities determine the priorities to be handled.

The following organizational structure is designed to reflect these considerations.

Functional Break-Down of The
Division of Information Programs
Federal Extension Service, USDA

Office of the Division Director

1. Program Leadership. Studies National and regional trends and developments in agriculture, home economics, agricultural economics, and youth programs to determine current and long-range needs for educational information programs; appraises national, regional and State information programs and exercises leadership in effecting changes in current programs, or formulating new programs, when the need is indicated by changing program goals or emphasis.
2. Policy and Program Formulation. Formulates current and long-range policies for information programs in support of educational programs; participates with other program divisions in conducting and developing the content and scope of educational programs; coordinates division policies and program recommendations with recommendations from other organizational units of the Service, the Department, and cooperating private and State agencies.
3. Program Direction. Exercises administrative and technical direction and coordination in the application of approved policies and conduct of information programs in support of agricultural, home economics, agricultural economics, and youth programs; appraises and adjusts operating methods as necessary to improve their effectiveness.
4. Employee Development. Exercises leadership in the training and development of appropriate Federal, State and county staff members in the most effective presentation media such as radio, television, visual aids, newspapers, periodicals, and bulletins, organized in a manner that will enable individual farm families to adopt pertinent facts and practices as a part of their overall plan for farm and home operations.
5. Liaison. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with USDA agencies and private organizations concerned with agricultural communications; obtains and coordinates the assistance of such groups in providing informational support for educational programs; cooperates with research agencies in appraising agricultural communications research needs and in the prompt development of educational work utilizing research findings, as soon as they can be made available, in the solution of agricultural communications problems.

Publications and News Media Branch

1. Program Leadership. Studies National and regional trends and developments in agriculture, home economics, agricultural economics, and youth programs to identify needs for new or more intensive publications and news media programs; conducts periodic appraisals of State publications and news media programs in the light of national and regional problems; exercises leadership in the cooperative planning and development of State publications and news media programs coordinated with national and regional needs.
2. Program Operations. Participates with other program divisions in conducting and developing the scope and content of educational programs; provides consultative and direct assistance to State extension services in appraising and conducting publications and news media programs; presents to USDA for production planning purposes needs of States for all types of printed materials; obtains research, economic, policy, and program information from USDA, prepares it in compact, useable units, and presents it for State extension adaption and use through publications and news media channels; prepares feature articles, news stories, information kits, fact sheets, reports, and other information materials to support educational programs; performs editorial work and provides consulting service on all information work; creates and develops new or improved publications and news media techniques for adaption in educational programs.
3. Employee Development. Provides leadership and direct assistance in training Federal, State and county workers in the most effective presentation of scientific and practical information through the use of publications and news media, organized in a manner that will enable farm families to adopt pertinent facts and practices as a part of their over-all plan for farm and home operations.
4. Liaison. Develops and maintains effective working relationships with publications and news media channels in government and private industry, both as sources of knowledge and as channels for the release of educational information.

Audio-Visual Branch

1. Program Leadership. Studies National and regional trends and developments in agriculture, home economics, agricultural economics, and youth programs to identify needs for new or more intensive audio-visual programs; conducts periodic appraisals of State audio-visual plans and operations in the light of national and regional problems; exercises leadership in the cooperative planning and development of State audio-visual programs coordinated with national and regional needs.

2. Program Operations. Participates with other program divisions in conducting and developing the content and scope of educational programs; provides consultative and direct assistance to State extension services in appraising and conducting audio-visual programs; ascertains State ideas, attitudes, and needs for specialized types of educational films, television shorts, and other audio-visual educational materials, and presents States' needs and viewpoints for consideration in connection with USDA audio-visual production planning; creates and develops new or improved audio-visual techniques for adaption in educational programs.
3. Employee Development. Provides leadership and direct assistance in training Federal, State and county workers in the most effective presentation of scientific and practical information through the use of audio-visual communication aids such as radio, television, educational films, exhibits, charts, filmstrips, and photographs, organized in a manner that will enable farm families to adopt pertinent facts and practices as a part of their over-all plan for farm and home operations.
4. Liaison. Develops and maintains effective working relationships with USDA, industry, educational, and other groups concerned with audio-visual aids; seeks out and adapts the latest advances in techniques, equipment and ideas for dissemination to State extension services.



